

CITY OF SEATTLE

2011 State Legislative Agenda

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SESSION PRIORITIES – 2011

Areas of Primary Focus

1. Fully participate in the budget process. Our goal is to strive to protect human services, health, K-12 and higher education, and other critical areas such as the Housing Trust Fund.
2. Work with the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) to develop and advocate for a comprehensive package of local options for fiscal flexibility, while protecting all existing revenue sources for local municipalities.
3. Secure sustainable long- and short-term funding options for King County Metro transit, including funding for transit as part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program, as agreed to in the three-party agreement of January 2009.
4. Defend Seattle and all Washington municipalities against any proposed legislation that would create a legal mechanism to shift the state's responsibility for cost overruns on major state transportation projects to local governments.
5. Address the following criminal justice issues: strengthen juvenile gun crime penalties in response to youth gun violence; increase penalties for the crime of vehicular homicide and allow prior vehicular homicide and driving under the influence (DUI) convictions to be used as a basis to elevate current DUI charges to felony DUI; maintain full funding for the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative; and modify the state's "Three Strikes" law to impose a mandatory 15 year minimum sentence instead of a mandatory life-without-parole sentence for offenders with only Class B felony convictions not involving a sex offense or a deadly weapon enhancement finding.
6. Support efforts to comprehensively reform education on a statewide basis.

Areas of Significant Interest

Mitigating and Adapting to the Impact of State Budget Cuts

The State faces a nearly \$6 billion budget deficit for the 2011-13 biennium. The process of closing the projected 2011-13 deficit will result in deep cuts and the likely elimination of core programs and services the State provides. We will work with the State to make shifts in the budget that help us adapt to the new realities we will face as a result of the ongoing budget crisis. For example, if significant cuts to the Department of Corrections' budget results in the release of inmates to the community at large, it may make sense to

make small shifts in funding to expand programs that monitor persons previously incarcerated, programs like the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative.

Preserving the Safety Net

Periods of economic downturn affect people from every walk of life, but their effects are felt most keenly by the vulnerable. To the greatest extent possible, we ask the State to preserve programs that protect the most vulnerable and reduce future social costs by providing the tools needed for self-sufficiency. In response to the Governor's recent across the board cuts, we have identified Maternity Support Services, the Disability Lifeline, the Senior Services Act, and Immigrant Services as areas of particular importance to Seattle.

Transportation

We support an environmentally sustainable transportation system with stable funding for transit and options to expand transit service in the future. To address long-term funding needs, Seattle supports efforts to craft a statewide transportation package, for voter approval, that:

- Includes sustainable funding for transit operations;
- Results in expanded transit service;
- Prioritizes safety and maintenance projects, and
- Meets both the City's and the State's greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets.

The City supports the State having full responsibility for all costs associated with the State's portion of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program, consistent with past practice for transportation projects and with our legislative priorities. The City also asks the State to ensure that the project's contingency fund is maintained at a level consistent with the recommendations of the Expert Review Panel. The City supports continued collaboration between WSDOT and SDOT to develop tolling and traffic management policies that meet revenue targets while minimizing and mitigating traffic diversion.

We also support securing a full funding package for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement Project, including tolling authority for the I-90 Bridge. The City supports the adoption of legislation that establishes clear triggers for conversion to full dynamic tolling on SR 520 and for changes to the minimum HOV occupancy levels to facilitate traffic flow, particularly for transit, on the corridor. We also support protecting the Arboretum and mitigating any unavoidable impacts to this City asset.

Flood District

We support resolving issues of tax suppression as they relate to the King County Flood Control District to secure funding for high priority City projects such as the seawall replacement.

Public Safety

In addition to the issues identified among our highest priorities, we support investments in youth violence prevention and intervention, new tools to prevent and reduce gang violence, and domestic violence prevention and services. We believe that local governments should have the ability to regulate firearms or weapons in public places to ensure the safety of their communities and local circumstances. We also support legislation that increases penalties for negligent drivers who injure or kill vulnerable roadway users and support the continued use of automated traffic safety cameras.

Education

In addition to supporting efforts to comprehensively reform education, the City supports maximum possible funding for Early Learning and Basic Education. We support capital investments in Seattle Public Schools' skills centers. We support one set of licensing requirements for childcare offered in public facilities that recognizes that these sites are generally suitable for pre-K and before and after school programs. During challenging economic times, it is also particularly important to support community colleges, technical colleges, and state universities as they provide access to retraining and workforce development opportunities.

Areas of On-going Concern

Economic Development

We support extending the Main Street tax incentive program to cities greater than 190,000 in population, extending the Washington Filmworks tax incentives, and extending tax incentives for Life Sciences Research and Development. We also support efforts to implement strategies and recommendations for clean energy jobs and businesses proposed by the Washington State Clean Energy Leadership Council. We support the extension of the existing stadium taxes if those revenues are used in ways that promote Seattle's economic vitality and attractiveness as a destination, including funding for arts and culture and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. We also seek a state capital appropriation of \$1 million in order to help prepare for the 50th anniversary of the World's Fair in 2012. Seattle supports tax increment financing as a tool to encourage economic development and community improvement projects, including those that involve a transfer of development rights. We seek legislation that will restore local regulatory oversight and enforcement of towncars and limousines, as it existed in the past. To help better manage on-street parking and support access to local businesses, we are seeking additional tools to prevent misuse of disabled parking placards. We are also interested in expanding the City's existing parking tax authority to permit more equitable application of the tax, allowing it to apply to all parking stalls and not just in situations where there is a direct commercial transaction.

Sustainability

We support a new, long-term state funding source for local stormwater management programs that will help Seattle improve water quality and protect salmon. In addition, funding from the local toxics account is critical for the City's efforts to clean-up a number

of local Superfund sites. Consequently, we support the protection of MTCA funds that go into the local toxics account.

General Government

Seattle, in concert with the AWC, seeks the ability to recover costs associated with public records requests, clarification that the Public Records Act does not require ongoing or continuing responses, and an automatic exemption for witnesses. We also support legislation clarifying that we may adopt certain portions of our city code through reference. Additionally, we support modernizing state law requirements for giving notice to the public concerning local legislation.

Race & Social Justice

Every person has the right to live, work, and learn free from discrimination. We support legislation that prevents discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and in lending practices. We support efforts to promote racial justice in economic opportunity, criminal justice, education, health, environmental protection and in government policies, programs and procedures. We support efforts to protect the rights of and services provided to immigrants. In the 2011 Legislative Session we will give special attention to the legislative recommendations of the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable working to eliminate the opportunity gap by reducing racial disparities in public high school graduation rates.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

We support development of common industry standards for recycled products, funding for recycling facilities, promotion of product stewardship, and legislative initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling. We support product stewardship for fluorescent lighting products and surplus pharmaceuticals, as well as framework legislation to ensure manufacturers' responsibility for waste products, including fluorescents, paint, carpeting, pharmaceuticals and medicines. To help promote waste reduction, we are also seeking elimination of the requirement that phone companies publish and distribute telephone directories.

Homelessness

Seattle continues to work with other local jurisdictions and the State to help assure appropriate financial participation by all levels of government for critical human services. To that end, Seattle supports State efforts to assist with the implementation of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, including:

- Measures to require state institutions, including the Department of Corrections, and the foster care system to create and implement informed and responsible discharge practices;
- Measures to facilitate development of low-income and affordable housing; and
- Efforts to use existing funds more efficiently, working to fund provision of services and housing in a coordinated fashion.

Housing

Seattle believes that housing—its availability and affordability—is critical to the quality of life of our residents and neighborhoods. We also support resources for transitional and short-term rent programs for those who are currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and for increased hospitalization opportunities for the mentally ill. We support policies that stem foreclosures, enhance counseling opportunities, and establish a right to mediation for homeowners facing foreclosure.

Law & Criminal Justice

We support a modern regulatory framework that results in the safe access to medical cannabis for qualified patients and that provides better clarity for law enforcement. We also support safeguards for protected groups from harassment and violence through misuse of the Public Records Act. Violations of anti harassment orders issued by courts of competent jurisdiction should be enforceable in other jurisdictions, not simply in the jurisdiction where it was ordered. We also support efforts that would allow courts of limited jurisdiction to order convicted defendants to pay restitution.

Planning & Development

Seattle believes in the right to impose fees to fund necessary facilities and services related to the impacts of development and to require appropriate infrastructure such as open space and sidewalks associated with new development. We support the expansion of incentive zoning to include provisions that incentivize creating new open space, preserving current open space, creating multi-modal transportation infrastructure, and preserving landmark structures. We support efforts to clarify that local jurisdictions may regulate land use and development to protect public health, safety and welfare through development regulations. Seattle supports efforts to update the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) so that it works more efficiently and promotes growth within urban growth areas, while still affording the same levels of environmental protection. We support exempting farmer's markets from SEPA requirements and clarifying that the farmer's market at Pike Place Market meets the technical definition of a farmer's market. We also support adoption of "cottage" laws that would allow value-added home processing and selling of low-risk food items.